

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 -10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A service element that belongs to a distributed system in a motor vehicle as a component, the distributed system further including other components that are independent of one another and interconnected by a bus, the service element comprising:
a processing device disposed in the motor vehicle and adapted to perform operations including the operations of:

~~an arrangement for configuring the other components;~~
~~an arrangement for upgrading the other components;~~
~~an arrangement for maintaining the other components;~~
performing an error diagnosis of software running on the other components;
in the case of an error, correcting the software within a framework of maintenance;
conducting, within the service element, a remote diagnosis of the other components of the distributed system; and
~~an arrangement for performing an emergency function.~~

12. (Currently Amended) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the processing device is further adapted to perform the operations further comprising one of:
~~an arrangement for detecting a new component and for integrating the new component into the distributed system; and~~
~~an arrangement for operating a display device to represent information about a configuration.~~

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the processing device is further adapted to operations of 13, further comprising:
~~an arrangement including communicating with~~ a communication element for loading new software for the ~~plurality of other~~ components.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the processing device is further adapted to perform the operations of 15, further comprising:
~~an arrangement including communicating with~~ a communications element for, in the case of a serious functional error, contacting a service provider.

17. (Currently Amended) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the processing device is further adapted to perform the operations further comprising:

~~an arrangement for~~ operating a display to transfer information about the distributed system to a user of the distributed system.

18. (Currently Amended) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the processing device is further adapted to perform the operations of further comprising:

~~an arrangement for~~ checking newly loaded software in accordance with a predetermined value.

19. (Currently Amended) A distributed system, comprising:
a bus; and

components connected by the bus, and the components that are being independent of each other and being disposed in a motor vehicle, one of the components being the
~~components include~~ a service element that includes:

a processing device adapted to perform operations, the operations including:

~~an arrangement for~~ configuring the other components,

~~an arrangement for~~ upgrading the other components,

~~an arrangement for~~ maintaining the other components,

performing an error diagnosis of software running on the other components;

correcting the software within a framework of maintenance in the case of an

error;

conducting, within the service element, a remote diagnosis of the other components of the distributed system; and

~~an arrangement for~~ performing an emergency function.

20. (Previously Presented) The distributed system according to claim 19, wherein:
at least one of the ~~plurality of other~~ components includes a communication element.

21. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 14, wherein the communications element includes a transceiver station communicating over a radio channel.

22. (Currently Amended) The service element according to claim 11 ~~claim 13~~, wherein the error diagnosis is performed at a predefined time interval.

23. (Previously Presented) The service element according to claim 11, wherein the bus includes one of an electrical wiring system, an optical wiring system, and a radio based system.

24. (New) A service element that belongs to a distributed system in a motor vehicle as a component, the distributed system further including other components that are independent of one another and interconnected by a bus, the service element comprising:
a processing device disposed in the motor vehicle and adapted to perform operations including:
configuring the other components;
upgrading the other components;
maintaining the other components;
detecting an emergency situation; and
if the emergency situation is detected, acquiring a video image of a passenger, comparing the acquired video image with a recorded image, and determining if an emergency function should be performed based on the comparison.

25. (New) A service element that belongs to a distributed system in a motor vehicle as a component, the distributed system further including other components that are independent of one another and interconnected by a bus, the service element comprising:
a processing device disposed in the motor vehicle and adapted to perform operations including:
configuring the other components;
upgrading the other components;
maintaining the other components;
detecting an emergency situation; and
in the emergency situation, acquiring an audio sample of a passenger, analyzing the acquired audio sample, and determining if an emergency function should be performed based on the analysis.